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Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP72-00337R000100190015-2

**NRO & USAF REVIEWS COMPLETED**

2 June 1970

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT: Briefing on New Soviet Bomber for Staff of House Armed Services Committee**

1. On 1 June 1970  of SF/A met with Messrs.  25X1 Russell Blandford and Frank Slatinshek, Chief Counsel and Assistant Chief Counsel of the House Armed Services Committee, to discuss the new Soviet bomber.  of OLC was present.  25X1A

2. The main question concerned apparent discrepancies between USAF and CIA statements about the nature and status of the new bomber. It was explained that there were no differences in fact, and that there was agreement on the general characteristics of this aircraft.

3. Mr. Slatinshek and other members of the committee staff had recently been briefed by Mr. Raymond Schneider of FTD. This briefing reflected the most recent FTD/USAF assessment of performance, including a modest increase in estimated range. CIA had not been previously informed of this revised estimate. This was the main cause of the problem, as the committee staff had been given one set of figures in earlier briefings by CIA, and then a different set by FTD. The revised FTD estimate is expected to be formally accepted by DIA, and OSI has indicated general concurrence. The new performance figures should be used in future CIA publications and briefings, pending further intelligence.

4. The FTD/USAF briefing also emphasized the intercontinental capability of the new bomber, whereas CIA briefings and publications have acknowledged this capability without "pushing" it. The revised performance estimate improves the intercontinental potential of this aircraft, although aerial refueling and the use of Arctic bases would still be required to obtain good coverage of US targets. Future CIA briefings should be careful to give adequate acknowledgement to the intercontinental potential of this bomber.

5. Other differences in emphasis may also have contributed to the impression of disagreement. For example,

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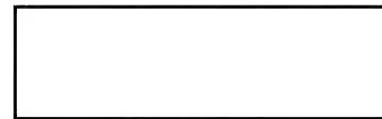
the FTD/USAF briefing appears to have included some reference to the existence of "at least" two prototypes, allowing the listener to conclude that there might well be three or more. FTD would agree, however, that there are probably two prototypes at this time.

6. It was apparent that Messrs. Blandford and Slatinshek were not well-informed on the data base concerning the new bomber. This undoubtedly contributed to the mistaken impression of a basic difference in intelligence assessments of the new bomber. The nature of the information available was briefly reviewed.

7. Possible mission profiles for the new bomber were briefly discussed. It was pointed out, for example, that the ability to make low altitude penetrations would be an asset, but that this would reduce range. It was also noted that the estimated capability of Mach 2 at high altitude--which seemed to concern Mr. Blandford--was not a likely profile, but rather an indirect result of the aircraft being designed for low altitude high speed penetrations. The estimated performance of the new bomber was related to that of existing types.

8. The question of the classification of the new bomber as a "heavy" or "medium" was raised. It was pointed out that it would be best to avoid using either term because of the connotations of "intercontinental" and "peripheral" missions. The new bomber falls in between the existing heavy and medium bombers, and could be used for missions currently performed by either class.

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Analyst  
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